



State of Arizona

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State Launches New Efficiency Effort

Operation Clean Sweep Utilizes Inmate Labor for Highway Clean Up

PHOENIX – Arizona inmates will give a boost to an effort to pick up litter on Arizona's busiest highway.

Governor Jan Brewer lauded the efforts Wednesday of the Arizona Department of Corrections and the Arizona Department of Transportation for partnering in Operation Clean Sweep to deploy dozens of inmates along the I-10 corridor between Phoenix and Tucson to remove trash from the well-traveled highway. Brewer said she is looking to expand the inmate work crews to other sections of Arizona highways.

"Inmates will perform this community service and beautify an important Arizona corridor at a minimal cost," Brewer said. "With limited resources, inmate labor can help Arizona save money but continue to perform important maintenance."

Through Operation Clean Sweep, Arizona plans to deploy about 80 inmates per day from three prison facilities to eradicate litter from I-10. Inmates will initially concentrate on a 90-mile section of the interstate, supplementing community volunteers and commercial sponsors who maintain small segments. Approximately 1500 bags of trash have been collected in just the first two days of Operation Clean Sweep.

Corrections Director Charles L. Ryan is expanding the use of inmate labor to provide jobs within the prison system and allow governments with shrinking budgets to continue providing service. Inmates are paid 50 cents an hour when working on highway road crews.

"Inmate labor is a valuable resource for state agencies and local governments in this difficult economic time," Ryan said. "Our state's beauty should not be hidden by trash blowing along the side of the highway."

Transportation Director John Halikowski said the public safety responsibilities of ADOT will always be the agency's first priority.

"The beauty of Arizona is a responsibility of everyone in the state – citizens, drivers or those just passing through," Halikowski said. "The expanded partnership with Director Ryan and the Department of Corrections shows the state's commitment to public safety and interest in looking for solutions during tough budget times."

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